

# CHELCO NEWS

POWERED *by* YOU

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## Heat, wholesale costs factor in summer bills

Are your recent energy bills higher than what you have come to expect? Extreme summer heat is the most likely culprit. To better understand your energy bill, here are some answers to the frequently-asked questions we get on what contributes to your bill.

### What are the biggest users of electricity in my house?

The biggest contributors to monthly energy usage are typically heating or cooling units, water heater and large appliances, such as your washer, dryer, stove or refrigerator.

### Why does my bill increase even when I don't do anything different?

Heating and cooling usage is impacted by the difference in outdoor temperature and thermostat setting. Running your cooling unit at 75 degrees when it is 85 degrees outside will allow your unit to run intermittently, while 100-degree weather will require the unit to constantly run to keep your house cool. Likewise, you'll see higher winter bills when it's coldest outside, such as last December's cold front.

### What are some ways I can reduce usage during extreme heat or cold?

Since your biggest user of electricity during these months is heating and cooling, run your temperatures as high as you can comfortably stand it in the summer, and as low as possible in the winter. To increase comfort and efficiency, use curtains and blinds to keep sun out during the summer and let it in during the

winter. Additionally, ceiling fans are a great tool to cool you in the summer or push the warm air down to you in the winter.

### What are the different components that make up my total bill?

**Basic Service:** This rate is a flat amount and covers the cost to run service to your home or business, regardless of the amount of energy you use. This covers the cost of your meter, service line, transformers and other equipment necessary to bring safe and reliable power to your home.

**KWH:** Kilowatt-hours. This is your basic usage rate and does not fluctuate. At CHELCO, this distribution-level rate has not increased since 2013.

**DCA:** Distribution Cost Adjustment. This rate covers the day-to-day costs CHELCO incurs to operate. This rate is within our direct control, and its most recent adjustment was a rate **decrease** in 2021.

**WPCA:** Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment. This rate covers the price for our wholesale power provider, PowerSouth Energy Cooperative, to supply electricity. This rate is largely dependent on fuel prices, which have been volatile over the past few years but have recently begun to stabilize. If your bill is changing but your usage isn't, it's because this rate fluctuates from month to month.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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## Did You Know...

If you have questions about your monthly bill, we have a team of experts that can help you find an answer. Our Energy Services team is also available to schedule an in-home energy audit to help you identify where you may be losing efficiency and to offer advice on ways you can save energy and money. Call our Energy Services team at (850) 307-1122 or email [energyservices@chelco.com](mailto:energyservices@chelco.com) for more information.



## CEO Insights: Beware of utility scams and door-to-door sales tactics

Living in the Sunshine State, it's no surprise to me that Florida's solar industry is particularly robust. Unfortunately, solar contractors sometimes make false claims regarding potential savings, energy production, installation timing and even CHELCO's rate structure. It's important to me that our members know CHELCO is their trusted subject matter expert for all their energy-related questions.

While we've recently been made aware of salespeople going door-to-door throughout our service area, this is a great reminder to always be mindful of **ANY** utility misinformation or scam attempts.

### **Beware of suspicious phone calls, emails, texts and other communication methods.**

I last wrote about this topic three years ago, in July 2020, when scammers were actively targeting co-op members and utility customers who were more often than not at home during quarantine. During this time, a common phone scam would typically begin with a phone number that appeared to be from a valid utility company. The scammer would usually claim the customer had a past-due account and threaten to disconnect service or take legal action if immediate payment was not made.

Of course, this would unnerve most of us who depended on the power to remain on while we were at home. Unfortunately, these type of scams are still around, and we advise our members to combat them by being aware of the status of your account and knowing that CHELCO will never call to demand immediate payment to avoid power disconnection. If you ever receive a call like this, please hang up and call us to report it immediately.

### **Know how to spot shady sales tactics from private vendors**

CHELCO supports renewable energy, such as wind and solar, as a sustainable part of our energy mix for many years to come. That said, we do not support solar salespeople knocking on doors claiming to have partnered with CHELCO for solar installations. This scam was perpetrated on my wife, who answered the front door a few weeks ago to find a young man claiming that his solar company was partnering with CHELCO.

While we offer a net metering program for members and support solar for members for whom it is feasible, we want members to make an informed decision before committing to solar.

Here are a few things to be wary of during sales pitches:

#### **1) High-Pressure Sales Tactics:**

Don't believe claims that the price quoted is good for one day only.

**2) Incentives:** There is currently a 30% federal tax credit called an Investment Tax Credit (ITC), which reduces the tax amount owed to the federal government. This is not a rebate, and not everyone will benefit or qualify.

**3) Overstated Benefits:** It is false that adding a solar array to your home will completely eliminate your electric bill. Solar systems are often not powerful enough to generate the energy needed to power a residence's full needs.

#### **4) Misrepresenting Relationships:**

Do not trust representatives who may misrepresent their relationship with CHELCO. If you are unsure, please call us before making a commitment.

If you are interested in renewables, CHELCO's Energy Advisors are available for an unbiased analysis and requirements of our Interconnection Agreement. Call our Energy Services Department at (850) 307-1122 or email [energyservices@chelco.com](mailto:energyservices@chelco.com).

**Steve Rhodes,**  
Chief Executive Officer

## **BE AWARE**

CHELCO has not contracted with any solar installers. We've been informed of sales representatives fabricating their relationship with CHELCO or stating that we sent them to your home.



## CHELCO earns Spotlight on Excellence Award



**Pictured above: CHELCO Communications Specialist Tyler Wood (right) and Vice President of Member Services and External Affairs Emily Cowan with the award.**

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) recently announced the 2022-2023 Spotlight on Excellence Winners, and CHELCO received a “Silver” award in the “Best Video” category for their “Who is CHELCO” video.

Each year, the NRECA recognizes the outstanding work produced by electric cooperative communication and marketing professionals from across the country. The 18 categories reflect the wide scope and valuable contributions of co-op communicators today, and entrants are judged against cooperatives of a similar size. This marks the third consecutive year CHELCO has received a Spotlight on Excellence Award.

The winning video highlights the many things CHELCO does, the dedication of our employees and their commitment to our members and the community.

“Being selected as a Spotlight on Excellence Award winner for the third consecutive year is a great honor for our cooperative,” said Emily Cowan, CHELCO Vice President of Member Services and External Affairs. “We’re proud of the work we do, and it’s very rewarding to be recognized among our peers in the Spotlight on Excellence program.”

The winning video can be viewed at the top of the homepage at [CHELCO.com](https://CHELCO.com).

### Three Years of Excellence

**2021:** Best Total Communication Program

**2022:** Best Photo

**2023:** Best Video



## Hurricane Season Resources

As we enter the height of hurricane season, now is an important time to review your family’s disaster plan and know your evacuation zone. Sign up for your county’s local weather alerts by visiting [AlertOkaloosa.com](https://AlertOkaloosa.com) or [AlertWalton.org](https://AlertWalton.org).

For storm prep and outage resources, visit CHELCO’s storm center at [CHELCO.com/storm-center](https://CHELCO.com/storm-center) or by scanning the QR code below.



## Recipe of the Month



### Shrimp Dip

Try a new dish to add to your lineup for football season and beyond! Learn this recipe at [CHELCO.com/recipes](https://CHELCO.com/recipes).

CHELCO is governed by a nine-member board of trustees: Lee Perry, District 1; Terry Pilcher, District 2; Reese Harrison, District 3; Brady Bearden, Vice President, District 4; Ronald Jones, District 5; Gerald Edmondson, President, District 6; Bert Prutzman, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer, District 7; Gayle Hughes, Secretary/Treasurer, District 8; Dwayne Davis, District 9.

## Vogtle Unit 3 begins commercial operation



CHELCO's commitment to powering homes and businesses 24/7/365 requires a diverse energy mix, and our wholesale power provider, PowerSouth Energy Cooperative, has completed crucial steps toward keeping reliable power flowing.

Georgia Power recently announced the commercial operation of the new Unit 3 of Vogtle Nuclear Power Plant in Georgia, becoming the first newly-constructed nuclear asset in the United States in over 30 years. PowerSouth will purchase 125 megawatts (MW) of the carbon-free, zero-emission electricity generated by the Unit, which will provide about 5% of the energy that PowerSouth provides to CHELCO.

"Vogtle's addition to the reliable energy mix that serves our community will have unparalleled value," said CHELCO CEO Steve Rhodes. "It is dependable around the clock and will help protect our members from the cost of potential carbon restrictions in the future. Nuclear has the ability to provide large amounts of power with no air pollutants or gas emissions."

Unlike traditional fossil-fuel generation, nuclear plants do not

burn anything. They use uranium, a naturally occurring element, as fuel. The atoms in the fuel are split to generate heat, which produces steam. The steam pressure turns a turbine connected to a generator that spins to produce electricity. A half-inch uranium pellet creates as much energy as 149 gallons of oil, 17,000 cubic feet of natural gas and one ton of coal ore.

Vogtle Unit 4 will soon follow. Georgia Power reports the final stages of construction and testing are ongoing, and Unit 4 has received final approval from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to begin fuel load and startup tests. Once online, Vogtle's two new units will produce enough energy to power half a million homes annually.

Nuclear energy supplies more than half of America's carbon-free electricity. Nuclear generation is a steady energy production resource while renewable sources, like wind and solar, are variably limited by the weather. The cost of nuclear electricity is also projected to remain stable over the long-term, making it a predictable resource when fuel prices rise.

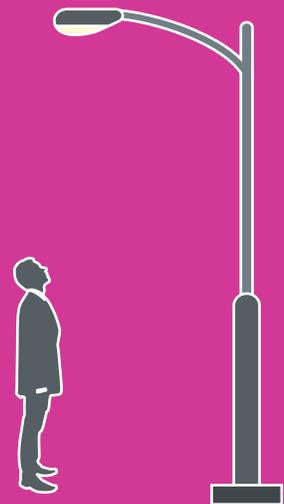
## Report Non-Working Street Lights

CHELCO appreciates members' help in identifying non-working street lights.

To report a non-working street light, call (850) 307-1126; email [lighting@chelco.com](mailto:lighting@chelco.com); visit the CHELCO online member portal; or download the MyCHELCO app.

When reporting a street light outage, please include the street light number, which is on the pole.

For more information on outdoor and decorative lighting, visit [CHELCO.com](http://CHELCO.com).



## IS \$25 YOURS?

If the account number below matches yours, call us at (850) 892-2111 or stop by any CHELCO office to claim a \$25 credit on your next bill! This month's winner is:

**Keating - 9000150268**

For unclaimed capital credits, visit [CHELCO.com/capital-credits](http://CHELCO.com/capital-credits).